

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/821,810

Examiner

Crystal J. Barnes

Applicant(s)

FUKUOKA ET AL.

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2121

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to Amendment received on 12 May 2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 2-20 (renumbered claims 1-19).
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 12 May 2004 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 - * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a Notice of Allowance in response to Amendment received on 12 May 2004. Claims 1 and 21-23 have been cancelled. Claims 2-4, 7-9, 11-17 and 19 have been amended. Claims 2-20 are now pending in this application.

Drawings

2. The replacement drawing sheets were received on 12 May 2004. These drawing corrections are acceptable.

Specification

3. The amendments to the specification to add the reference signs in the description and correct minor informalities were received on 12 May 2004. These corrections are acceptable.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

4. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an

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amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Allen Wood, Reg. No. 28,134 on 10 June 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 2 last line, the deleted term "with" has been reinserted;

Claim 14 page 17 lines 5, 6, 8, 11, 16 and 22; deleted the term "radiocommunication".

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

5. Claims 2-20 (renumbered claims 1-19) are allowed.

6. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As per claim 4, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach means for issuing a bill to the customer, the bill claiming a sum of the communication charge and the laundry equipment usage rate.

As per claim 8, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach means for charging the customer based on receipt of a signal for prohibiting unloading of the laundry from the portable communication

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tool of the customer in response to the transmission of the request for permission to unload the laundry, or based on absence of response from the portable communication tool of the customer.

As per claim 12, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach the data to be transmitted from the laundry equipment to the portable communication tool of the customer by the first radio communication means include information for identifying the laundry equipment; the portable communication tool of the customer transmits the information for identifying the laundry equipment received from the laundry equipment to the laundry managing server by the second radio communication means.

As per claim 13, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach the laundry managing server identifies the laundry equipment to be used by the customer based on the positional information of the portable communication tool transmitted from the portable communication tool owned by the customer.

As per claim 14, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach second judgment means for judging whether operational informational permits operation of the machine or not when the first radio

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communication means receives the operational information as a result of the transmission of the response permitting operation of the machine.

As per claim 16, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach the store controller comprises external communication means, means for bringing the laundry machine into an operable condition upon receipt of information for identifying the laundry machine along with a signal for permitting operation thereof, and means for transmitting the operational information inputted from the laundry machine by the external communication means.

As per claim 19, the prior art of record taken alone or in combination fail to teach second communication means for transceiving signals by prescribed low-power, short-range radio communication which is different from aforementioned radio communication and means for transmitting inputted operational information of the laundry machine in response to receipt of verification of the password by the second communication means.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Crystal J. Barnes whose telephone number is 703.306.5448. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday alternate Mondays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Knight can be reached on 703.308.3179. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Anthony Knight
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600

cjb
9 June 2004